```
1
                      UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
1
                      EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
 2
 3
 4
    JERICHO GROUP LTD, ET AL.,
                                          14cv02329
5
                       Plaintiffs,
    ٧.
 6
                                          United States Courthouse
                                          Brooklyn, New York
7
    MID-TOWN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED
                                          WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2015
    PARTNERSHIP, ET AL.,
8
                       Defendants.
9
10
11
            TRANSCRIPT OF CIVIL CAUSE FOR STATUS CONFERENCE
12
                 BEFORE THE HONORABLE DORA L. IRIZARRY
                      UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
13
14
    APPEARANCES:
15
    FOR THE PLAINTIFFS:
                            BRADLEY S. GROSS LAW OFFICE
                            BY: BRADLEY S. GROSS, ESQ.
16
                            90 Maiden Lane
                            Fourth Floor
17
                            New York, New York 10038
18
                            LIDDLE & ROBINSON, LLP
                            BY: JAMES R. HUBBARD, ESQ.
19
                            BY:
                                 CAITLIN BROWN. ESQ.
                            800 Third Avenue
20
                            New York, New York 10022
21
22
    FOR THE DEFENDANTS:
                            PHILIPS NIZER
                            BY:
                                 JEFFREY SHORE, ESQ.
                                 GEORGE BERGER, ESQ.
23
                            BY:
                            BY:
                                 EDWARD W. ROSS, ESQ.
                                 EDWARD G. IMPERATORE, ESQ.
                            BY:
24
                            21 Main Street, East Building
25
                            Suite 200
                            Hackensack, New Jersey 07601
```

			2
1	(APPEARANCES CONTINUED)		
2	FOR THE DEFENDANTS: JONES	DAY JOSHUA S. STILLMAN, ESQ	
3	BY: I	MEIR FEDER, ESQ. ast 41st Street	
4		ork, New York 10017	
5	LAW O	FFICES OF LISA M. SOLOMON	
6	305 Ma	_ISA M. SOLOMON, ESQ. adison Avenue	
7	Suite New Yo	4700 ork, New York 10165	
8			
9		E CANALES, CSR, RPR	
10 11	Brooklyn, New York 11201		
12	Cirrsii	rceau i . com	
13	Proceedings recorded by mecha produced by computer-assisted	anical stenography, transcript d transcript.	
14		•	
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			

3 Proceedings THE COURT: Please be seated. Good morning. 1 2 THE CLERK: This is Civil Cause for Conference, 3 Docket 14CV2329, Jericho Group, et al, versus Mid-Town 4 Development Limited Partnership, et al. 5 Please state your appearances, starting with 6 plaintiff. 7 MR. GROSS: Good morning, your Honor. Brad Gross, 8 attorney for the plaintiff, Jericho Group, LTD. 9 MR. HUBBARD: Good morning, your Honor. I'm Jim 10 Hubbard of Liddle and Robinson. With me is Caitlin Brown. 11 And with your permission, we would appear here specially this 12 morning. We are not counsel of record, but we are here, with 13 Mr. Gross, in an effort to assist with the issue of the 14 representation of the plaintiff. 15 THE COURT: Well, are you planning to become 16 attorney of record? 17 MR. HUBBARD: We are considering it. We have just 18 been contacted in the last few days. We have had extensive discussions with Mr. Pfeiffer about that, and we are 19 20 discussing retention of our firm to participate in the -- to 21 substitute Mr. Gross, and it will take us a few days to make 22 that decision. I'm not prepared to enter an appearance this 23 morning, but I simply say to your Honor that we are actively 24 and in good faith considering the representation of the

plaintiff in this case, and wanted to be here and make

	Proceedings 4
1	ourselves available, to the extent the Court had questions
2	about that.
3	THE COURT: All right. I'll make an exception and
4	permit your appearance here today under those conditions. I
5	hope that you are prepared to respond to some of the issues
6	that we are addressing here today.
7	MR. HUBBARD: Thank you very much, your Honor.
8	THE COURT: For the defendants, for Mid-Town
9	Development Limited Partnership.
10	MR. SHORE: Good morning, your Honor. Jeffrey
11	Shore. My name is
12	THE COURT: Sorry. We're having microphone
13	problems. Sorry about that.
14	MR. BERGER: George Berger
15	THE COURT: It might be better if you sit.
16	If I can ask all the attorneys, actually, to speak
17	into the microphones and remain seated.
18	MR. SHORE: Sure, your Honor. My name is Jeffrey
19	Shore. I'm a party, and I'm counsel at Philip Nizer, which is
20	also a party. Lead counsel, George Berger, should be on phone
21	right now.
22	THE COURT: Mr. Berger, good morning. Good morning
23	Mr. Shore. And I expect that we'll have other parties by
24	telephone as well.
25	MR. BERGER: Your Honor, I don't know what's going

	Proceedings 5	
1	on	
2	THE COURT: No, it's not your fault. We're having	
3	technical difficulties on our end. My apologies. I'm going	
4	to ask the parties who are on the telephone, please, when you	
5	speak during the proceedings, to identify yourselves.	
6	For Edward Imperatore?	
7	MR. IMPERATORE: Hi, your Honor.	
8	THE COURT: You're present. Good morning.	
9	MR. IMPERATORE: Good morning.	
10	THE COURT: And do we have Matthew Jesse Sinkman?	
11	MR. SHORE: No, he's not here, your Honor.	
12	THE COURT: He's not here.	
13	MR. SHORE: He's just an associate of our firm.	
14	He's not a party.	
15	THE COURT: Okay. And for Maurice Stone.	
16	MAURICE STONE: Maurice Stone, your Honor.	
17	THE COURT: Good morning.	
18	And Edward Ross by telephone.	
19	EDWARD ROSS: By telephone, your Honor.	
20	THE COURT: Mr. Ross, are you there?	
21	EDWARD ROSS: I'm on the telephone, your Honor.	
22	THE COURT: Edward Imperatore, you're appearing by	
23	phone. Mr. Imperatore, are you there?	
24	MR. IMPERATORE: Yes, I'm on the phone, your Honor.	
25	THE COURT: Okay. It might be helpful if you move	
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	He's not a party. THE COURT: Okay. And for Maurice Stone. MAURICE STONE: Maurice Stone, your Honor. THE COURT: Good morning. And Edward Ross by telephone. EDWARD ROSS: By telephone, your Honor. THE COURT: Mr. Ross, are you there? EDWARD ROSS: I'm on the telephone, your Honor. THE COURT: Edward Imperatore, you're appearing by phone. Mr. Imperatore, are you there? MR. IMPERATORE: Yes, I'm on the phone, your Honor.	

	Proceedings 6
1	any cell phones or electronic devices away from the phones.
2	That could cause some interference.
3	George Berger.
4	MR. BERGER: Yes, your Honor. I'm here. I'm both a
5	party and lead counsel.
6	THE COURT: I really apologize. I'm so sorry about
7	that.
8	And Jeffrey Shore.
9	MR. SHORE: Yes, that's me.
10	THE COURT: I'm sorry. We have you here twice. And
11	you're here for on behalf of Philip Nizer.
12	PERRY GALLER: Perry Galler, administrative partner.
13	THE COURT: And we also have on behalf of
14	defendants, Sherman, Geramia and Jones Day.
15	MR. FEDER: Yes, your Honor. Meir Feder, for those
16	defendants, with Joshua Stillman.
17	THE COURT: Okay. And I see Mr. Geramia is here.
18	Good morning.
19	MR. FEDER: And Mr. Sherman should be on the
20	telephone.
21	THE COURT: Mr. Sherman, are you with us on the
22	telephone?
23	FREDERICK SHERMAN: Yes, I am, your Honor.
24	THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
25	For Lisa Solomon.

Proceedings 7 1 MS. SOLOMON: Yes, your Honor. 2 THE COURT: Okay. Good morning. 3 MS. SOLOMON: Good morning. 4 THE COURT: And Robert Goebel. ROBERT GOEBEL: Good morning, your Honor. 5 6 THE COURT: All right. I called this conference for a number of reasons. It was precipitated by plaintiffs' 7 8 request through Jericho Group Limited's representative, Samuel 9 Pfeiffer to --10 Are you here, sir? 11 SAMUEL PFEIFFER: Yes. 12 THE COURT: You can sit here with your counsel. 13 SAMUEL PFEIFFER: Thank you. Thank you, 14 your Honor. 15 There was a request made to THE COURT: Sure. relieve plaintiffs' counsel, who still -- at this point in 16 17 time, Mr. Gross, and to allow plaintiff 30 days to obtain new 18 counsel, to respond to defendants -- to the four motions to 19 dismiss that have been filed by the defendants. 20 obviously, plaintiff, being a corporation under the law, must 21 have counsel in order to litigate this case, but I have a 22 number of concerns here. 23 Some of the concerns were raised by the defendants, 24 in that this is the fifth time now that the plaintiff has 25 brought suit regarding the same failed real estate transaction

8 Proceedings 1 and the undue delay that bringing in new counsel may cause to 2 move this case forward. Now, I don't understand what the 3 reason is for plaintiffs seeking new counsel. And I don't know, Mr. Pfeiffer, if you want to address that since you are 4 here as a representative of the corporation. Can we pass a 5 6 microphone over to Mr. Pfeiffer. Make sure the green light is You have to tap the base to make sure the light is on. 7 8 Stand or sit, please, and just speak into the microphone. 9 SAMUEL PFEIFFER: Thank you. I sent your Honor a 10 letter dated February 10th. 11 THE COURT: Yes, I read the letter. 12 SAMUEL PFEIFFER: And I didn't have the lawyers. 13 Looks like the condition of what it is, or who it went to, 14 somehow could not prepare the papers, and all this dragging around and of this long time should have been much earlier. 15 16 THE COURT: He's here now. 17 Mr. Gross, you filed the Complaint, and you filed 18 the Amended Complaint on behalf of your client, which will 19 bring me to something else later on. And you know this case, 20 so I don't see what benefit there is to bringing in new 21 counsel, at this point. 22 MR. GROSS: Your Honor, it was somewhat well known 23 from August until --24 THE COURT: I don't think your microphone is on. 25 Touch the base. There you go.

Unfortunately, I have suffered some

THE COURT: How are you feeling now?

medical issues, and it's been an ongoing situation.

MR. GROSS:

MR. GROSS: Right now I'm shaking, quite frankly. I'm more than welcoming the substitution. And my familiarity with the case might facilitate and be able to assist a new firm. Mr. Pfeiffer has certainly taken the position that he feels that a substitution would be an appropriate thing to do, at this time.

THE COURT: Well, obviously, things happen in life, right. We are all human beings, and you can't predict when things are going to effect your health and how that will effect your ability to function in your personal life, as well as in your working life. If you have a job, you would not be the first attorney to be in that situation, and I think it takes a great deal of personal strength to recognize that you might need some help, in that regard. So in that regard, since you feel personally that you -- the substitution would be appropriate, given your personal situation, then I'm not going to oppose the substitution of counsel.

That being said, however, having reviewed the history of this case, the Complaint, and the various charges complaints that have been made here, and the history of this case as it meandered through the state court system, the history is very -- is described, at least for the first time

in the First Department's decision, in *Jericho Group Limited versus Mid-Town Development*, *LP*, at 32 A.D.3d 294, a decision in 2006, wherein the Appellate Division granted the defendants' appeal and reversed a decision by the Supreme Court judge, which denied the defendants' motion to dismiss the Complaint, in the first instance.

There were other decisions that were subsequently rendered by the appellate decision and need to appeal to the Court of Appeals has been denied. And as far as I am concerned, based on my review, it certainly appears that the present Amended Complaint makes exactly the same arguments that were adjudicated in the first and the second actions. And the second action was addressed by the Appellate Division in 42 A.D.3d, 463 in 2008. That's a First Department decision in Jericho Group Limited versus Mid-Town Development, LP. And the First Department held there that the purchaser, that be being Jericho Group Limited, had no cause of action for fraud against the defendant.

And, finally, in the third decision by the First Department, in 2009, 76 A.D.3d, 431, where -- this is the second action that was brought -- relates to the second action brought in state Supreme Court brought by Jericho. The Appellate Division held that res judicata barred the action, because the same arguments were raised in the second cause of action.

Proceedings

Now, I would like to hear from plaintiff why the Court should not sua sponte dismiss plaintiffs' claims 1 through 15, 17, and 19 under the doctrine of res judicata. And, frankly, as to the remaining claims, 16, 18, and 20, those relate to conversion -- 16 is conversion by Defendants Szegda -- hope I'm pronounced that correctly, S-z-e-g-d-a -- and Baystone. Eighteen is intentional infliction of emotional distress by defendants Berger, Shore, Philip Nizer and Mid-Town.

And 20 relates to a Section 1983 action against the attorney -- defendants or alleged violation of civil rights. Why I shouldn't dismiss those claims for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted? Because, quite frankly, reviewing the papers in this case, they do appear to be likely to be dismissed.

Mr. Gross, perhaps you're in the best situation to address this.

MR. GROSS: I may be in the best situation, but I'm not entirely prepared to do that today. I didn't anticipate having oral argument on the motions to dismiss. We have arguments, and reasons, and justification for bringing the claims that we brought. We believe them to be meritorious and ones which would sustain --

THE COURT: How can you stand here and tell me that you think they're meritorious, when already the state court

23

24

25

Document 133 Proceedings 12 1 has decided that bringing these same actions over again in a 2 separate state court proceeding was res judicata -- was 3 dismissible on res judicata grounds? 4 MR. GROSS: We don't believe the claims set forth in the existing Complaint are the same as the claims that were 5 6 brought in the prior actions. In fact, the facts giving rise to these claims weren't even known to the plaintiff until 7 8 2013, and that's what the basis of the new case is. We don't 9 believe that it's the same claims in the res judicata issues, 10 and we were prepared to deal with that in full brief to 11 address what was raised already in these motions to dismiss, 12 which included the res judicata issues. And we believe that 13 we will be able to sustain those claims, because we don't 14 believe they're the same as the ones from the state court 15 action. 16 THE COURT: They're entirely the same as what was in the sate court action --17 18 MR. GROSS: Your Honor, the claim --THE COURT: -- as has been described in the 19 20 defendants' motions. 21 Claims that were brought in this case --MR. GROSS:

THE COURT: Quite frankly, I am inclined under Rule 11 to impose sanctions against plaintiff and plaintiffs' counsel for bringing an utterly frivolous action that is clearly intended just to be vexatious and to harass

defendants.

MR. GROSS: Your Honor, we brought the case in good faith, and we brought the claims in good faith. And I'm not in a position and prepared to defend entirely the claims, at this juncture --

THE COURT: Well, I have to tell you that the tone of the letters that have been filed by Mr. Pfeiffer in this case show anything other than good faith, and what they show is a personal vendetta that he has. He has mentioned all kinds of things that are irrelevant to this case, about he and his family members having been victims of crimes, of violent crimes that have nothing to do with any the defendants or the parties who are here, both by phone and in person. What's that intended to do, I have no idea. If, in fact, it is true that the plaintiffs have been victims of crime, I am sorry. I've been a victim of a crime, too. It's not a good feeling, to say the least. But it's irrelevant. We're talking about a contract dispute. It has nothing to do with any of that.

Moreover, the kinds of allegations that have been made against the attorneys here, and the parties here, the defendants here, the kind of nastiness that has been exhibited, shows nothing but a personal vendetta against the defendants. Moreover, it's not the kind of thing that, frankly, should have been filed in federal court, in terms of those letters, or in any court. It's unprofessional, and it

14 Proceedings doesn't advance the case in any way. It doesn't illuminate 1 2 any of the legal arguments that the Court has to consider. 3 Explain to me how a corporation suffers intentional emotional distress, because I have not found a case that says that. 4 It's a corporation. 5 MR. GROSS: At the time --6 7 THE COURT: It can suffer money loss. 8 MR. GROSS: At the time it was filed, your Honor, 9 Anna Pfeiffer was still a party in the action, as an individual doing business as Jericho. She has since withdrawn 10 11 her claims. We're willing to look very carefully and 12 closely --13 THE COURT: Are you telling me, then, that that 14 claim is withdrawn? 15 MR. GROSS: I'd have to consult with my client before I make that representation, but I can make a 16 17 recommendation. 18 THE COURT: If Ms. Pfeiffer is no longer part of the 19 case, then how does -- the corporation, which is the remaining 20 plaintiff, correct? 21 MR. GROSS: Yes, your Honor. 22 THE COURT: Then how does the corporation suffer 23 intentional emotional distress? And why is the plaintiff 24 wasting the Court's time and the defendants' time with 25 addressing a, frankly, frivolous claim?

·	#: 4962
	Proceedings 15
1	MR. GROSS: Again, your Honor, I can consult with my
2	client and make a recommendation, but I'm not in the position
3	to do that. I'm on the verge of being substituted out of the
4	case. I just wanted to, again, ask the Court if we can have
5	the opportunity with counsel, if he does, in fact, come in, to
6	spend some time studying each of these issues, and take under
7	advisement what you're mentioning here today and try to move
8	things in the most appropriate fashion going forward.
9	THE COURT: Let me hear from defendants. Anyone
10	want to go first?
11	MR. SHORE: Mr. Berger is the lead counsel.
12	THE COURT: I'm sorry. Okay.
13	On the phone, you want to address this, and can I
14	have your name, please.
15	MR. BERGER: Yes. George Berger.
16	THE COURT: Is this Mr. Berger?
17	MR. BERGER: Yes.
18	THE COURT: Maybe you're a little too close to
19	whatever instrument you're on.
20	MR. BERGER: I'm on my house phone, your Honor. I'm
21	not on a speaker phone.
22	THE COURT: That sounds good. Wherever you are
23	right now, let's try to work with this.

24

25

MR. BERGER: First of all, thank you for letting me appear by telephone. I appreciate the consideration. I'm not

sure I'll be able to get anything out with this feedback, but I'll try.

THE COURT: Do your best.

MR. BERGER: I appreciate your Honor's observation. As your Honor knows, we're very serious about our motion to dismiss. We are also very concerned. The fact that this litigation, as of next month, will be pending for a year, in which notice of pendency had been filed against the party. And your Honor knows what that means, in terms of market ability. And we're very anxious to get the stay that your Honor imposed recently lifted so that Magistrate Judge Scanlon can go ahead with the papers that are before her on the motion to cancel the move to strike of pendency. It's very important to our clients.

I think your Honor -- the merits of the Amended Complaint, -- and there's nothing I can add to that, because we're in complete accord with your views. I'm not going to take the Court's time to talk about my personal resentment being named a defendant here and the charges that have been filed against me, which are ridiculous and in bad faith, in imposing a compliment (sic). So at that point, I would just end my remarks and urge your Honor to proceed in the direction that you're going.

Now, as far as the substitution of counsel is concerned, I didn't hear anybody say they were coming in as

	Proceedings 17
1	counsel. I only heard somebody say that he was considering
2	it. And considering it, to me, is not a reason to delay
3	filing the opposing briefs. They were due on February 16th.
4	We already managed to get an extra two weeks of time, so we're
5	over seven weeks now in responding to the motions to dismiss.
6	And they have to go forward, or your Honor sua sponte needs to
7	act, as you indicated you would, because we need to move on
8	with our business. Thank you very much.
9	THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Berger.
10	Anyone else on the phone wish to be heard?
11	MR. BERGER: People on the phone are just parties.
12	THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
13	Any counsel who are here present also wish to be
14	heard?
15	Ms. Solomon, perhaps, do you wish to be heard?
16	MS. SOLOMON: Yes, your Honor.
17	THE COURT: If you could sit and speak into the
18	microphone, so this way the folks on the phone can hear as
19	well. Make sure that green light is on.
20	MS. SOLOMON: It looks like it's on.
21	THE COURT: Keep your voice up.
22	MS. SOLOMON: I will, your Honor. Thank you. I
23	would like to be heard, your Honor, because I have been
24	brought into this situation, along with my husband Robert
25	Goebel. Robert Goebel, for approximately one-and-a-half years

represented and is counsel for Mr. Pfeiffer, and his representation was subsequently terminated many years ago. I have had no involvement whatsoever with any of the people in this case, have never represented Mr. Pfeiffer, saw him for the first time in my life today.

The only involvement that I had in the many prior litigations was that I sat in one deposition to assist my husband more than ten years ago, but yet now for the last two-and-a-half years, I find myself drawn into three different actions that are started and stopped, and started and stopped, five different complaints. And I have made repeated requests that I be removed from the action, because there is -- from the multiple actions, because there has not been a single specific allegation of any wrongful conduct being made by me.

Not only have I been sued, but Mr. Pfeiffer has brought charges against the Ethics Committee, against me, and I find this to be a horrendous and horrifying situation. In my 25 years of practice, I have never had a Complaint filed against me by anyone, led alone somebody I never met in my entire life and that I never represented. I never made a single appearance in any court. And, as I stated, I have no involvement in this, other than I am married to one of the defendants, as to which Mr. Pfeiffer has no valid claim either.

The claims are frivolous. They're wrongful. And

Proceedings

it's an abuse of the legal system, what it is occurring here, and I very much appreciate your Honor's observation. And I think it has to come to a stop, and it must come to a stop. I don't know that your Honor has yet had an opportunity to view our motions to dismiss, due to the bundle rule, but I have as well filed a motion for sanctions against Mr. Pfeiffer and his counsel, due to their refusal to remove me from this case.

And the addition of my husband as a defendant does not change anything, that is due to the res judicata nature of what has happened here and in the prior proceedings; they're all the same claims. He's trying to mix it up, but there is nothing new here. Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: Any of the other counsel wish to be heard?

Jones Day?

MR. FEDER: Your Honor, I have nothing to add to what's been said. We obviously agree with your characterization of the Complaint, but we won't embellish on that. Thank you.

THE COURT: Why shouldn't -- if Ms. Solomon -- never mind the situation with the husband, who previously represented the plaintiff. But at least with respect to Ms. Solomon, she is not named in any of the claims. Why shouldn't I just dismiss her outright from this case right now? To the extent that she wants to assist her husband in

Proceedings

continuing to litigate this matter, that's up to her and to her husband. But in terms of continuing on as a defendant in this case, again, frankly, this just goes to a showing of bad faith on the part of plaintiff here, just this sort of let's just throw out this wide net, and anyone who even came close to the defendants is going to be sucked into this litigation.

Why shouldn't I just dismiss it outright as to Ms. Solomon?

MR. GROSS: Your Honor, I was confused. Ms. Solomon

said two things just now; she had never represented him, but she did appear at a deposition. I have a transcript where she represented herself as the attorney for the plaintiffs, at the time. One of the issues that Mr. Goebel and Ms. Solomon are connected with is the fact that simultaneously at the time Mr. Goebel took Mr. Pfeiffer's case, in the first instance, he was representing one of the target defendants at that same time. And the allegations in this Complaint, which make it different from the state court allegations, is that there was a conspiracy and a bit of collusion going on among these attorneys.

Mr. Goebel, it's alleged, my client, is fairly convinced, undertook certain acts to protect these other defendants at his expense and the expense of the contract, giving rise to those decisions that you just made reference to. That's the theory of this case. It's not a straight contract claim that was brought in a sate court action. The

Proceedings

theory in this case is far different from that, and it goes beyond that, in a manner in which these actions took place giving rise to those decisions.

We've alleged that those decisions are actually the product of the wrongful conduct. We have documents now that reflect that testimony that was given in affidavits submitted in the state court action are false; they're not true. That's the nature of this pending action, which is why it's different from the state court claim and why we believe it will be sustained. But, again, I apologize to your Honor. I wasn't prepared to make oral argument in total on the motions to dismiss.

THE COURT: But you've had copies of the defendants' motions now for quite some time. I forget what date the defendants --

MR. BERGER: January 9th, your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. So it's been approximately two months that they've been in your possession. And, frankly, I don't know, maybe I'm old fashioned, but the way that I got trained, when you got called into court, you better know every aspect of your case and be prepared to answer any question the judge may throw at you. I don't find that to be a sufficient excuse.

Well, it seems to me that under the circumstances of this case, it is appropriate for me to exercise my authority

Proceedings

and my jurisdiction to dismiss sua sponte plaintiffs' claims 1 through 15, 17 and 19, under the doctrine of res judicata.

And I do want to read the following into the record, which will constitute the opinion of the Court, and the parties are free to order a copy of the transcript as a copy of the Court's opinion.

A little background information I think is relevant here. This is the fifth lawsuit that was filed by plaintiff, attempting to reinstate a real estate contract. It cancelled over a decade ago. The history of the dispute is most clearly described in *Jericho Group Limited versus Mid-Town Development* at 32 A.D.2d, 294, First Department, 2006, which I'll call Jericho I.

In short, on June 18th, 2002, plaintiff and defendant Mid-Town Development, LP, or Mid-Town, entered into a contract, which I'll call the contract, for plaintiff to purchase two undeveloped properties in Manhattan for \$28 million, with a deposit of \$250,000. The contract provided that prior to closing, there would be a 75-day study period, and that during the study period, Mid-Town would provide plaintiff with any documents related to the condition of the property that plaintiff reasonably requested.

After unsuccessfully attempting to negotiate an extension of the study period, from September 2002, to a later date, and about a week before the expiration of the study

Proceedings

period, the parties to the contract discussed an alleged oil spill that had occurred at or near the property, as well as exhibits to a development agreement between Mid-Town and Amtrak. The day after the study period expired, plaintiffs sent a letter to Mid-Town stating that plaintiff wanted its \$250,000 down payment returned, in accordance with the contract, unless Mid-Town extended the study period or indemnified plaintiff for any cleanup of the alleged oil spill. And that's described in the Jericho I opinion, at pages 295 to 96.

On September 12th, 2002, after Mid-Town requested an express statement as to whether plaintiff was cancelling the contract, plaintiff provided, quote unquote, "confirmation" that the September 3, 2002 letter was intended, quote, "intended as the exercise of its right under the contract, to cancel said contract," end of quote. And Mid-Town returned the down payment on September 13th, 2002. And that's in the First Department's opinion at page 297. Obviously, I'm summarizing the details here, but they are spelled out in greater detail in the Appellate Division's opinion.

Plaintiffs' first action, which was filed in
New York State Supreme Court, in November 2004, alleged that
Mid-Town breached the contract, failed to return the down
payment and defrauded plaintiff by failing to disclose
information about the property relating to an oil spill and

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Proceedings

easements held by Amtrak. The Appellate Division First Department rejected these claims twice, again in Jericho 1, 32 A.D.3d, 294, at 298 through 299, Jericho Group Limited versus Mid-Town Development, LP, 47 A.D.3d, 463, First Department.

In 2008, leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals was denied at 11 N.Y.3d 801 and 2008. That is the Jericho II action. And plaintiff, in this Jericho II opinion, from the Appellate Division, and plaintiff initiated a second action against Mid-Town and attorneys, alleging that the first state court judgment against it had been procured by fraud. The trial court dismissed that lawsuit as well, and held that plaintiffs' claims were barred under the doctrines of res judicata and collateral estoppel.

The Appellate Division unanimously affirmed *Jericho* Group Limited versus Mid-Town Development, LP, 67 A.D.3d, 431, First Department, 2009. Leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals was denied at 14 N.Y.3d 712 in 2010. That's the third Jericho opinion.

Since losing the second action, plaintiff has initiated two more state court actions against Mid-Town and various other defendants, neither of which it has litigated to completion. The suit before this Court was filed by plaintiff on April 10th of 2014. Defendants have moved to dismiss the action, and plaintiff filed an amended -- I'm sorry -before -- withdrawn. Defendants moved to dismiss the first

Proceedings

Complaint, just to be clear. Plaintiff then filed an Amended Complaint, on November 4th, 2014. Defendants again moved to dismiss. Plaintiff now has requested a new attorney and time to respond to the motions to dismiss.

The present Amended Complaint makes -- which I'll refer to as the Complaint -- makes the same arguments that were adjudicated in the first and second actions; namely that plaintiff never cancelled a contract, Mid-Town never returned plaintiffs' \$250,000 down payment, and that Mid-Town fraudulently obtained the state court judgments by misrepresenting the facts to the state courts.

However, this final action, the one before the Court, also alleges that the fraud committed on the state courts was part of an elaborate RICO scheme involving Mid-Town, Mid-Town's representatives, defendants Edward Imperatore, Maurice Stone, Edward Ross, and Arthur Imperatore; and lawyers in their individual capacities, defendants George Berger, Jeffrey Shore, Philip Nizer, LLP, Frederick Sherman, Todd Geramia, and Jones Day; and plaintiffs' lawyers, in their original contract negotiation, Defendant Szegda, and in the second action Defendant Goebel, and his wife Lisa Solomon.

Specifically, plaintiff argues that Defendant Goebel failed to raise plaintiffs' winning arguments before state court, and then threatened and extorted plaintiff, as part of the RICO scheme. That's in the Complaint, in paragraphs 444

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Proceedings

1 to 46, 486 to 96, and, also, in paragraphs 515 to 46.

2 | Plaintiff also alleges that it has obtained new evidence that

3 the defendants previously withheld from plaintiff and the

4 state courts, in the form of an e-mail, requesting information

5 from Mid-Town about the oil spill, on August 21st, 2002.

6 | That's in the Complaint, in paragraphs 497 to 514. The state

7 courts had determined that plaintiff had requested that

8 information, on August 30th of 2002. See Jericho I at 296.

Next, plaintiff claims that Defendant Szegda was never authorized to cancel the contract and that Mid-Town knew this. That's in the Complaint, in paragraphs 622 to 633.

Lastly, plaintiff examines all of defendants' most recent motions to dismiss, and claims defendants admitted they defrauded the state courts. That's in the Complaint, in paragraphs 562 to 669.

The Complaint pleads 20 causes of action, including fraud on the plaintiffs and courts, violations of RICO, breach of contract, tortious interference with a contract. Those are claims 115 and 17. Conversion, which is claim 16; intentional infliction of emotional distress, claim 18; and violations of New York Judiciary Law, section 487, claim 19; and plaintiffs' civil rights under the Constitution, the § 1983 action, claim 20. That's in the Complaint, in paragraph 670 to 867.

Plaintiff seeks, among other things, declarations that the contract remains in effect, and that defendants

Proceedings

defrauded plaintiff and the courts; specific performance of the contract, and damages of at least \$200 million. Plaintiff also makes allegations against Defendant Szegda, defendant based on equities inc, about an unrelated incident.

Claims 1 through 15, 17, and 19, are barred under the doctrine of res judicata. Quote, "To determine the effect of a state court judgment, federal courts are required to apply the perclusion law of the rendering state," end of quote. Conopco, C-o-n-o-p-c-o, Inc. versus Roll International, 231 F.3d 82 at 87, 2nd Circuit 2000. Under New York Law, a court may sua sponte dismiss a Complaint under the doctrine of res judicata in appropriate circumstances.

See, for example, 390 West End Avenue Associates versus Youngstein, 22 A.D.2d 292. And that's First Department 1995.

In that case, the Appellate Division upheld the trial court's dismissal of a Complaint, where it had knowledge of the previous -- where the plaintiff had knowledge of the previous judgment.

Quote, "New York courts have adopted a transactional approach to res judicata, so that a final decision on the merits on one action bars all subsequent claims arising out of the same transaction or series of transactions, even if the claims are based on different legal theories, or the party is seeking a different remedy," end of quote. Resource Northeast of Long Island, Inc. versus Town of Babylon, 28 F. Supp.2d 786

at 791, Eastern District of New York, 1998. Citations are omitted. See also *Giannone versus York Tape & Label, Inc.*, 548 F.3d 191 at 194, 2nd Circuit 2008, and *Smith versus*

4 Russell Sage College, 54 N.Y.2d 185, 1981.

This doctrine applies both to claims asserted and claims that could have been asserted in the prior action, so long as the party to be precluded had a full and fair opportunity to litigate those claims. *Schuykill* S-c-h-u-y-k-i-l-l, *Fuel Corp. versus B. & C. Neiberg Corp.*, et al., 250 N.Y. 304, at 306 to 307, 1929.

Quote, "A judgment in one section is conclusive in a later one not only as to any matters actually litigated therein, but also as to any that might have been so litigated, when the issues -- when the two causes of action have such a measure of identity that a different judgment in the second would destroy or impair rights or interests established by the first," end of quote. See also *Santiago*, et al. versus

New York City Board of Health, et al., 8 A.D.3d 179, at 180 to 81, First Department, 2004.

Moreover, the doctrine of res judicata applies not only to parties to the prior action but to those in privy with those parties as well, including agents of the party. See *McDonald versus Lengel*, 2 A.D.3d 1182, at 1183 and 84, Third Department, 2014, in *Israel versus Wood Dolson Co.*, 1 N.Y.2d 116, at 119, 1956. Plaintiffs also cannot avoid dismissal on

Proceedings

res judicata grounds by arguing their claims are based on newly discovered evidence. See, for example, *Statter versus Statter*, 2 N.Y.2d 668, at 674, 1957.

Quote "It is commonly held that the mere discovery of fresh evidence is no answer to the defense of res judicata, when raised in a subsequent separate cause of action," end of quote.

All of plaintiffs' claims have been litigated to conclusion not once but twice in state court. Plaintiff already has tried to allege that Mid-Town defendants committed fraud on the court, in both their first and second state court actions, including specifically alleging a violation of New York State Judiciary Law Section 487, which is claim 19 of the Amended Complaint here. To the extent that plaintiff now alleges that the fraud involved Mid-Town's attorneys and plaintiffs attorneys, those claims are also barred under res judicata, as they arise out of the same transactions that were litigated in the first two cases.

Plaintiff had a full and fair opportunity to litigate those claims in the first two actions, and the claims involve parties that were in privity with the original parties or were agents of the original parties. Furthermore, the, quote unquote, "new evidence" that plaintiff relies on, in addition to being irrelevant to the court's application to the doctrine of res judicata, is not evidence that would have

Proceedings

effected the previous court's decisions. Plaintiffs also tried to argue it had newly discovered evidence in the first action, when it moved to vacate the judgment, but the Appellate Division denied that motion.

Additionally, plaintiffs' claims also may be barred under the *Rooker-Feldman* doctrine. The *Rooker-Feldman* doctrine states that district courts have no jurisdiction to adjudicate, quote, "cases brought by state court losers complaining of injuries caused by state court judgments rendered before the district court proceedings commenced, in inviting district court review and rejection of those judgments," end of quote. See *Exxon Mobile Corp. versus Saudi Basic Indus. Corp.*, 544 U.S. 280, at 284, 2005. The 2nd Circuit parsed that statement down and determined that Rooker-Feldman applies when four conditions are met:

First, the federal court -- and I'm quoting from the decision in *Hoblock versus Albany County Board of Elections*, 422 F.3d 77, at 85, 2nd Circuit, 2005. Quoting from *Exxon Mobile Corp.*, 544 U.S., at 284. And I'm omitting footnote, in reference to the footnote. First, a federal court plaintiff must have lost in state court. Second, the plaintiff must complain of injuries caused by state court judgment. Third, the plaintiff must invite district court review and rejection of that judgment. Four, the state court judgment must have been rendered before the district court proceedings could

commence; i.e., Rooker-Feldman has no application to federal court suits proceeding in parallel with ongoing state court litigation.

Whereas, in the present case, the first and fourth procedural requirements have been met, the district court must turn to the second and third substantive requirements and analyze whether they are met. See McKithen versus Brown, 481 F.3d 89, at 97, 2nd Circuit, 2007.

The 2nd Circuit also set forth the following rule to guide the court's inquiry as to whether the second requirement is met. Quote "A federal suit complains of an injury from the state court judgment even if it appears to complain only of third-party's actions. When the third-party's actions are produced by a state court judgment and not simply ratified, acquiesced or left unpunished by it. That's *Hoblock*, 422 F.3d, at 88.

In the present case, the third requirement is met as plaintiff is inviting this Court to review and reject the state court judgments. Whether the second requirement is met is a little less clear. However, there is an argument that plaintiff is complaining of injuries caused by the state court judgment's, as plaintiff states as much in his Complaint. At the same time, plaintiff argues that defendants' fraud causes state court decisions, and, therefore, the Court could determine, and, therefore, the Court could construe that fraud

Proceedings

on the card (sic) argument as already having been raised in the state court and rejected; and so, in effect, plaintiff is asking this Court to reverse a state court decision on the very same issue.

Plaintiffs' claims of -- against defendant Szegda regarding the Baystone case and intentional infliction of emotional distress, and for violations of plaintiffs' civil rights, are also likely to be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

I've already given notice to the defendants in that regard. I see no reason why if the only plaintiff that remains here is the corporate -- I'm sorry. Did I say plaintiff? I hope I didn't say defendant. Is the only plaintiff that remains here is the corporate defendant, why I shouldn't also dismiss claim 18? Because a company cannot be a victim of intentional infliction of emotional distress. And I haven't heard anything, other than counsel wants to consult with plaintiff.

There's only a company plaintiff here, and so, therefore, Count 18 is dismissed, for failure to state a claim under 12(b)(6). That leaves, then, claims 16 and 20. In that regard, since the motions to dismiss now have been significantly streamlined, I see no reason why plaintiff could not have a response to the motions to dismiss, insofar as they relate to those two remains claims, and I suppose a response

Proceedings

to the motion for sanctions that have also been included, and why that can't be done in short order?

Plaintiff has until the end of this week to decide whether or not it's going to continue being represented by Mr. Gross or whether new counsel is coming in. And, frankly, if I do not get a response by this Friday -- let me put it this way, by this Friday I must receive some notification by plaintiff that it has retained counsel. Whether it's Mr. Gross that continues on with the case, or whether it's new counsel that comes into the case, I need to know by this Friday. And if there's no new counsel here by this Friday with a notice of appearance filed with the court, this action is going to be dismissed; because, quite frankly, the remaining claims, I see very little grounds for the two remaining claims to survive here.

And, then, the only issue that will remain will be the issue of the motion for sanctions. I'm going to dispense with the bundling rule, because I would like to see the defendants' papers, especially since there is a motion for sanctions, so if by this Friday I could get -- or before that if I can get a hard copy for the motions. You can file the motions on the docket. And I would appreciate that, getting copies of the motions. Anything else that the parties want to address?

MR. BERGER: Yes, your Honor. May I please --

	Proceedings 34
1	THE COURT: Once I get notification Friday that
2	there are counsel, I'm going to set a briefing schedule for
3	the rest of the two remaining claims. And I, frankly, don't
4	see that that requires 30 days to address.
5	MR. BERGER: Your Honor, may I speak. It's George
6	Berger representing Mid-Town defendants.
7	THE COURT: Yes, Mr. Berger.
8	MR. BERGER: Your Honor, since your Honor
9	THE COURT: Hang on a second, Mr. Berger. We've got
10	our technical person here to the rescue.
11	MR. BERGER: Thank you. I'll wait.
12	(Pause in proceedings.)
13	THE COURT: I don't see any reason why we need to
14	have anyone other than Mr. Berger here present, at this point.
15	So, Mr. Berger, really you're the only person that we need, at
16	this point. And with respect to the other gentlemen, we thank
17	you for making yourselves available.
18	MR. BERGER: If they can hang on, then, maybe the
19	line will get better.
20	THE COURT: Okay.
21	(Pause in proceedings.)
22	THE COURT: Can we just get Mr. Berger back on the
23	phone.
24	MR. SHORE: Your Honor, if he's not on the phone
25	because he was the chairperson. We can call him right now on

	Proceedings 35
1	a separate phone and see if we can call him directly on his
2	home phone.
3	THE COURT: That might work better. Go right ahead.
4	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your Honor, which phone
5	should he call in?
6	THE COURT: We have to get a number.
7	MR. SHORE: I'll make sure he's off his home phone,
8	your Honor.
9	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We're having trouble getting
10	service here.
11	MR. SHORE: Maybe try his home phone.
12	THE CLERK: Mr. Berger.
13	MR. BERGER: Yes.
14	THE COURT: Mr. Berger, can you hear us?
15	MR. BERGER: Barely.
16	THE COURT: Okay. I don't know what's going on.
17	We'll try to do the best we can. You wanted to discuss
18	something.
19	MR. BERGER: Yes, your Honor. Since your Honor has
20	now dismissed to claim specific performance and for a
21	declaration of the 2002 contract, there is no basis for the
22	notices of pendency before your Honor. And under New York
23	State Law, you must instruct the you must cancel them and
24	issue an order instructing the clerk of the Supreme Court,
25	New York County to cancel them of record. There's no

Proceedings

discretion in this regard, because there is no longer a cause of action effecting title, or possession or use of the property pending before your Honor; and, therefore, there is no basis for the notice of pendency. That's one thing.

The second thing is, when you see our papers that will be filed this week, we have asked in our relief for an injunction against the plaintiffs and Mr. Pfeiffer for further litigation against the parties for this -- to the claims asserted in the Amended Complaint without the prior approval of a judge of this court. I don't know if the custom is that it's your Honor or the chief judge. I leave that to you.

THE COURT: That's normally up to the district. I'm sorry to interrupt you Mr. Berger --

MR. BERGER: This will just be the jumping off point for some other lawsuit they claim. We want you to seriously entertain that relief. We're seeking that relief in the state court on an appeal pending right now, but that would only apply to state court proceedings, so we need this similar relief in federal court proceeding. I ask your Honor to very seriously consider that as well. I hope you heard me.

THE COURT: I think I did. You are -- let me just repeat it. Can you hear me? I don't think he can hear me.

MR. BERGER: I'm sorry. I can't -- if you're talking to me, I don't hear you. I hear you now.

THE COURT: Okay. Can you hear me now?

	Proceedings 37
1	MR. BERGER: Yes. Wait a minute. Maybe I can
2	adjust the volume on my phone. Give me one second.
3	THE COURT: I apologize for all the technical
4	problems.
5	MR. BERGER: Yes, I have raised the volume on my
6	phone.
7	THE COURT: If I'm understanding you correctly, you
8	are asking for a dismissal of the notice of lis pendens
9	against the property in light of the dismissal of
10	the Court's dismissal of the charges.
11	MR. BERGER: Yes. Actually, the cancellation of the
12	notice.
13	THE COURT: A cancellation of the notice.
14	MR. BERGER: There's two notice of pendency pending
15	in this court, and they are dependent on the New York Law of a
16	cause of action which effects the title, use, or possession of
17	real property. You have now dismissed the only two causes of
18	action that effect title, use, or possession of real property,
19	namely the ones for specific performance. And for declaratory
20	judgment, the contract is still in effect; and, therefore,
21	there is no basis for any notice of pendency under New York
22	Law, and they must be dismissed.
23	THE COURT: So that's one application. And the
24	other you indicate that in the motions to dismiss there is
25	also a request for an injunction against the defendants from

Proceedings 38 1 bringing any further litigation in federal court --2 MR. BERGER: Against the plaintiffs, your Honor. 3 THE COURT: -- relating to the subject of this litigation without first getting leave of the Court, correct? 4 MR. BERGER: That's correct. It's not the 5 6 defendants, it's the plaintiffs. 7 I mean, right against the plaintiffs. THE COURT: 8 MR. BERGER: I'm asking for that. 9 THE CLERK: Bring an injunction against the 10 plaintiffs. THE COURT: 11 Right against the plaintiffs, injunction 12 against the plaintiffs. 13 MR. BERGER: Approximate Mr. Pfeiffer. 14 THE COURT: For bringing these claims against the defendants in this court without first obtaining leave of 15 16 the Court. That's normally a matter that is up to the district judge who is providing over the case at hand. 17 18 have asked for counsel for the defendants to file their motion 19 papers with the Court, so that I can see all of these 20 different applications. 21 And it certainly does behoove plaintiff to actually 22 obtain counsel, because otherwise you will be -- plaintiff 23 will be in default with respect to the motion for sanctions 24 and with respect to the request for an injunction. And, 25 frankly, given the whole history of this case, it seems to me

Proceedings

that a motion against -- a motion for sanctions under Rule 11 is maybe appropriate in this case. So plaintiff has been forewarned if -- on Friday I expect to get a letter, indicating that plaintiff has counsel or has not had counsel, and a notice of appeal to be filed, unless, Mr. Gross, you're staying on the case.

And then, at that point, I will set a motion -- a briefing schedule for the rest of the motions, to get a response to the remaining two counts, which are counts 16 and 20, the motion for sanctions, and for the injunction. And the Court will enter an order -- I think that motion was pending before the magistrate judge, correct?

MR. GROSS: Your Honor, if I can be heard on that? I don't mean to interrupt, but for the sake of judicial resources, I spoke to my client, and in light of the decision that was rendered today, we can take steps to have those lis pendens cancelled. I believe by stipulation I can do it with Mr. Berger, rather than burdening the Court.

THE COURT: The lis pendens is cancelled. Plaintiff is stipulating. But, in any event, the claims have been dismissed, and there's nothing pending that should encumber the property.

MR. GROSS: As an administrative matter, we'll take on the burden of clearing that.

THE COURT: Why don't I have defense counsel file

	Proceedings 40
1	any document, any judgment ordered that the defendant feels
2	since it's the defendant's property feels appropriate, for
3	the Court to sign. Obviously, the sooner you file that, the
4	sooner I can sign it. Okay. So I will be expecting to hear
5	further from the parties by the end of this week. All right.
6	Thank you all. Thank you to those who appeared by phone.
7	Mr. Berger, extend my thanks to them as well.
8	MR. BERGER: Yes, your Honor.
9	THE COURT: All right. Thank you.
10	MR. SHORE: Thank you, your Honor.
11	THE COURT: Before the parties go, Ms. Solomon, you
12	are dismissed in this action. You are named only in those
13	counts that I dismissed, so you are no longer in the action.
14	MR. SOLOMON: So you dismissed the action as to
15	every count as to me, your Honor?
16	THE COURT: Correct. That does not preclude you,
17	however, from having the motion for sanctions considered by
18	the Court, just to be clear.
19	MR. SOLOMON: Thank you, your Honor.
20	THE COURT: As to Mr. Goebel, I think he is named in
21	the civil rights count.
22	MS. SOLOMON: That's correct. That would be the
23	sole remaining count.
24	THE COURT: As to him, correct.
25	MS. SOLOMON: Your Honor, could I clarify, in our

```
Proceedings
                                                                   41
    motion papers as well, we had made requests for injunctive
1
 2
    relief. You will see that in the papers filed this week.
 3
               THE COURT: As to many of those affirmative
 4
    requests, the fact that you're dismissed from the case would
5
    not preclude the Court from considering it.
               MS. SOLOMON: Thank you very much, your Honor.
 6
7
                         (Proceedings adjourned.)
8
9
10
11
12
               I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct
    transcription of the record from proceedings in the
13
    above-entitled case.
                                       March 5, 2015
14
        <u>/s/ Nicole Canales</u>
           Nicole Canales
                                              Date
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
```